THE DUCHESS of BEDFORD

IT is with universal regret that the death of the Duchess of Bedford has to be presumed. On Monday, March 22, she set out in a Moth from her aerodrome at Woburn Abbey on what was intended to be a short flight, and since then, despite intensive search by R.A.F. aeroplanes and others, no trace of her has been found. She was aged 71.

Very unostentatiously, both the Duke and Duchess of Bedford have done a great deal of useful public work. Future ages will probably chiefly remember the work both of them have done for zoology and ornithology. *Flight* is naturally chiefly concerned with the Duchess' career as an airwoman. When she was 61 she set out as a passenger in Capt. C. D. Barnard's Fokker (with Bristol Jupiter) named *Princess Xenia*. This was the machine in which Capt McIntosh and Col. FitzMaurice started off on an attempt to fly the Atlantic, though they soon returned to Baldonnel. Afterwards McIntosh and Bert Hinkler started in the same machine to fly a great circle course to India, but were forced down in Poland by appalling weather. On the Duchess' first flight to India she and Capt. Barnard were forced down at Bushire by engine trouble, and waited at that very warm spot for ten weeks for a new engine. Then the Duchess bought the Fokker and re-named it *The Spider*. Its bad luck immediately left it. The Duchess engaged Capt. Barnard as her private pilot, and in August, 1929, they both flew to India and back in eight days, which was a record and a very fine one. Next year they made another record by flying *The Spider* to South Africa and back in twenty days. The Duchess then qualified for her "A" licence.

Nearly ten years ago she did *Flight* the honour of writing her impressions of her first year's experience as owner of a Moth; she began flying in an open machine and one cannot help feeling that she would have expressed the hope that she might also finish it in that way. Among the first British private owners, Her Grace remained to the end a devotee of the open cockpit aeroplane. Last year the Editor of *Flight* had a most interesting correspondence with her on this subject. To her the small cabin aeroplane was not to be compared with the open type. She loved the great outdoors, and did not mind the amount of draught which found its way around the screen. Her deafness kept the engine noise from becoming distressing, and one suspects that when Her Grace used cabin aeroplanes she did so almost entirely out of consideration for her pilots.

By her example the Duchess of Bedford did a very great deal to popularise flying, not only because of her many tours with such pilots as Barnard and Preston, but even more by her personal gift of sensing the kind of trip which would be "worth while." One of her favourite pastimes was to get among and above the clouds to admire in perfect peace the marvellous formations and colours there to be found. On one occasion she went up with her pilot in a Moth to 10,000ft. or so to see an eclipse of the sun; and she *did* see it. "It is," she said, "fortunate that there is not to be another eclipse for 200 years, for obviously the sun was very cross about it, as he has hardly been seen in England since."

Mary, Duchess of Bedford, must now, alas, be presumed to have made her last flight. Her friends will feel that she would have preferred the end to come during the pursuit of the pastime she loved so well.

Forthcoming Events

April 3. Rugby: R.A.F. v. Army, Twickenham.
April 6. R.Ae.S. Students' Section Debate: "Speed v. Safety," 7 p.m., R.Ae.S. Library.
April 8. R.Ae.S. Lecture*: "Control Problems," by Mr. A. G. Pugsley.
April 10. Aero Golfing Society: Martlesham Match.
April 15. R.Ae.S. (Coventry Branch) Lecture: "Production and Inspection Methods Applied to Screw Threads," by S. J. Harley. Armstrong Siddeley Canteen, 8.15 p.m.
April 15. Italian Aero Club: Sahara Rally.
April 22. R.Ae.S. Lecture*: "Power Plant Trends," by Mr. G. J. Mead.
May 6. Aero Golfing Society: Instone Trophy.
May 9. R.Ae.S. Garden Party, Great West Aerodrome, Hayes.
May 12-19. Austrian Aero Club: Austrian Whitsun Flight.
May 13. Leicester Airport Coronation Air Display.
May 15. Cardiff Aero Club: Coronation Rally.
May 15-18. Yorkshire Gliding Club: Whitsun Meeting, Sutton Bank.
May 26—June 6. Brussels Aero Show.
May 26-30. Austrian Aero Club: Salzburg Gliding Contest.
May 27. R.Ae.S. Wilbur Wright Lecture: "Turbulence," by Dr. Theodor von Karman. Science Museum, South Kensington.
May 29. Empire Air Day.
May 29-31. London-Isle of Man Race and Round-the-Island Contests.
June 4-6. York and Leeming F. Clubs: International Meeting, York.
June 11-14. Hungarian Aero Club: International Conference.
June 12. Bristol and Wessex Aeroplane Club: Garden Party, Whitchurch.
June 15-20. Magyar Pilota Picnic, Hungary.
June 20. R.Ae.C. of Belgium: Gordon Bennett Balloon Race, Brussels.
June 21-28. Federation Aeronautique Internationale: London Conference.
June 26. Royal Air Force Display, Hendon.
June 28. S.B.A.C. Display, Hatfield.
July 1. Aero Golfing Society: *Flight* Trophy.
July 3. Newcastle-on-Tyne Aero Club: London-Newcastle Race.
July 3. Ramsgate Airport, Official Opening.
July 4-18. Aero Club of Germany: Wasserkuppe Gliding Meeting.
July 10. Cardiff Aeroplane Club: London-Cardiff Race.
July 11. Italian Aero Club: Circuit of Rome.
July 15. Aero Golfing Society: Jubilee Cup.
July 17. Portsmouth Aero Club: Garden Party.
July 23—August 1. Swiss International Meeting.
July 24. Devon Air Day and Race: Plymouth, Exeter and Haldon.
July 31. Cinque Ports Flying Club: Folkestone Aero Trophy Race.
July 31—August 2. Yorkshire Gliding Club: Opening Meeting, Sutton Bank.
August 1-14. Yorkshire Gliding Club: Instructional Camp Sutton Bank.
August 1-31. New York—Paris Air Race Flights.
August 3-September 7. Public Schools Aviation Camp, Norwich.
August 6-7. Austrian Aero Club: International Rally, Lake Worth.
August 14-22. Yorkshire Gliding Club: Open Contest, Sutton Bank.
August 21. Thanet Aero Club: Aviation Meeting and Race.
August 21. Midland Aero Club: "At Home."
August 22-29. Italian Aero Club: Circuit of Littorio.
August 28 and 29. Cinque Ports Flying Club: Lympne International Rally and Wakefield Trophy Race.
September 10-11. R.Ae.C.: King's Cup Race.
September 12. Aero Club de France: Coupe Deutsch de la Meurthe, Etampes.
September 23. Aero Golfing Society: Cellon Trophy.

* These lectures take place in the Royal Society of Arts, 18, John St., London, W.C.2, at 6.30 p.m. Admission is by ticket obtainable through a member.